

***AT THE VANGUARD OF SUSTAINABILITY
TRANSITIONS?***

***Climate change, bio-cultural diversity and indigenous
knowledge***

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Motivation and Key argument

No single answer to climate change's global emergency:

The crisis is structural and all-comprehensive.

It is so grave that we cannot afford the luxury of choosiness or ideological predilections.

We need to mobilize the vast array of human knowledge and creativity in response to this century's most vital challenge.

Key argument: Bottom-up vs. top-down

Instead of beginning from the **top-down** (geo-engineering, nuclear, etc), we need to begin with what we already have –and, then, eventually move up.

What we already have is:

Bottom-up/low impact: *Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)*

Call for inter-disciplinarity

Diversity as the main crucible

- **Climate change's historical roots: *Homogenization***
 - Industrialization, consumerism, state-building, militarism, uniformity (from 'uniform')
- **Celebrating diversity**
 - Deep link between environmental knowledge and sustainability (from 'university' to multi-diversity)
- ***Bio-cultural diversity*:**
 - Recognizing the linkage between *biodiversity* and *cultural diversity*

Sub-state nations and regions

- Can sub-state nations and regions play a more active and dynamic in the search for sustainability transitions?
- *Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD)*: Great discrepancy in policies and goals. Some regions (i.e., **Wales** and **Scotland**) moving faster than others (i.e., **Flanders**)
- Why is there such discrepancy?
- What can be done to improve the situation?

Opportunities: Wales

- **Climate Change Strategy:** Target to reduce emissions by 3% a year (40% reduction by 2020), leading the way in renewable energies, plans to retrofit homes, improve energy efficiency in social housing
- Sustainable development bill: it becomes legally binding for all public bodies to take account of the environment and social issues when making a decision (schools, social housing, health trusts, hospitals, libraries , etc.).
- However, in 2009-2010 greenhouse emissions increased by 8% in Wales vs. 2% in England (economic boom accompanied by patters of consumption).
- Thus: High impact/high footprint

Opportunities: Maygana

- UNESCO supported rights based approach to adaptation and mitigation
- Increases resilience and adaptation
- Decreases vulnerability
- Survival of indigenous cultures/Peoples
- Bringing scientific and indigenous knowledge together
- **CLIMATE RESILIENT SELF DETERMINED DEVELOPMENT**

Challenges and Barriers

- State-centred policies and Center-periphery views.
- Climate change mitigation policies as new source of indigenous rights violations. Ex: REDD (Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation)
- **Lack of inter-cultural communication:** Paradoxically, globalization has decreased the possibility of inter-cultural communication, largely due to the imposition of globally uniform models (Westernization). But also between disciplines.
- Multidisciplinary approaches: Identify viable areas of collaboration between the hard and the social sciences

Proposals

- Acknowledge the value of indigenous traditional knowledge in climate change policies (assessment, mitigation, adaptation)
- Use the experience of Basque cultural resilience and revival as a based line for cooperation knowledge-sharing
- Support the education and right based approaches to climate change policies
- Search for new avenues for cooperation between scientific and traditional systems of knowledge
- Advocate the participation of sub state actors in climate change policies and diplomacies
- Policy proposals in the field of education/learning and public awareness rising

Key questions for future research:

- - How far is TEK preserved?
- - Which are its most salient features?
- - What can we learn from TEK?
- - What is already universal in TEK? Values, traditions, myths about the need to respect nature for human survival
- - Mythologies containing a deep awareness of the need to keep an ecological balance.



theguardian

Doha's most progressive country on climate change? **Wales**

Unlike the other 193 countries in Doha, Wales is about to introduce a unique legal requirement of all its public bodies

John Vidal
guardian.co.uk, Thursday 6 December 2012 13:37 GMT



A wind turbine in south Wales. Photograph: Alamy

Welsh assembly member John Griffiths stands out from the hordes of other environment ministers scurrying around the [UN climate talks in Doha](#). Along with Edna Molewa of South Africa, he can claim to represent a country that has enshrined sustainable development in its constitution.

But Griffiths can go further than any of the 194 countries at the talks. Unless there is a political upset, he says, [Wales](#) will become the first country in the world to make it legally binding for all public bodies, from health trusts to libraries and schools, to take account of the environment and social issues when they make a decision.

The sustainable development bill should be delivered in just under a year, says Griffiths